



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Sentenced to 44 Years in Prison for 2007 Slaying Over a Craps Game

Washington, D.C. - Cyrus Harrison, a 23-year-old resident of the District of Columbia, has been sentenced to 44 years and 4 months in prison for crimes related to the September 24, 2007 slaying of George Hill, a Maryland resident, in the 4500 block of Quarles Street, NE, Washington, D.C., U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips announced today. Harrison received his sentence yesterday in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia before the Honorable Herbert B. Dixon, Jr.

Following the trial in October 2009, a Superior Court jury returned guilty verdicts of first degree murder while armed, possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, carrying a pistol without a license, obstruction of justice, and conspiracy to obstruct justice. In handing down the sentence, Judge Dixon described the murder of Mr. Hill as a "travesty."

According to the evidence elicited during the week long trial, the defendant had been playing craps with Mr. Hill and others for hours when Mr. Hill decided to leave the game. Mr. Hill was ahead almost \$2000 when he decided to leave. The defendant began arguing with Mr. Hill, to convince him to give him a chance to win back his money. During the argument, the defendant retrieved his 9mm semiautomatic pistol from a friend, and a few minutes later, pointed it at Mr. Hill and opened fire. Mr. Hill ran down the street, but was shot in the back and fell to the ground. The defendant then chased Mr. Hill down and stood over him. Mr. Hill begged for his life, but the defendant began firing directly into Mr. Hill's body, until his gun was empty. The defendant then fled, hiding the murder weapon in the roots of a nearby tree and cutting off his shoulder length hair that same night.

The defendant was subsequently arrested in March 2008 after an eyewitness identified the defendant as the shooter. Shortly before the first trial date set in this case, the defendant learned the identity of the eyewitness, and began conspiring with his relatives to persuade and intimidate the eyewitness from testifying against him at trial. At trial, the government produced a series of recorded calls and witness testimony establishing the defendant's role at the heart of this

conspiracy to obstruct justice by tampering with a witness.

In announcing the Court's sentence, U.S. Attorney Phillips expressed his appreciation to the Metropolitan Police Department, and particularly praised the work of Violent Crimes Branch Detectives Lee Littlejohn, George Blackwell and Kimberly Lawrence, and Sixth District Officer Andrew Dawidowicz. He also commended the work of Legal Assistant Kelly Blakeney, Litigation Technology Specialists Kimberly Smith and Leif Hickling, and Victim Witness Unit's Debbie Cannon who helped reassure the victim's family throughout the investigation and at trial by working tirelessly to address their security concerns. Finally, he praised the outstanding work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Lynn Haaland, who indicted the murder and firearm charges and Assistant U.S. Attorney Sharad Khandelwal, who indicted the obstruction of justice and conspiracy charges and prosecuted the case at trial.

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